



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ARMOR
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ATZK-AR

25 November 2019

MEMORANDUM THRU DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ARMOR
FOR CHIEF OF ARMOR, US ARMY ARMOR SCHOOL

SUBJECT: Information Paper – Results of FY 19 Sergeants First Class Selection Board.

1. Purpose: To provide information to the Chief of Armor on the results of the FY19 selection list to Sergeant First Class (SFC).
2. Summary: The SFC board convened on 05 June 2019 and recessed on 27 June 2019 at Fort Knox, KY. The eligibility criteria for promotion consideration to SFC were: "ALL ADVANCED LEADERS COURSE AND SSD-III SSGs WITH A DOR OF 01 JUN 16 AND EARLIER WITH A BASD BETWEEN 30 NOV 00 AND 06 JUN 13 (BOTH DATES INCLUSIVE)." The reference is MILPER message 19-045.

Primary Zone: DOR is 01 JUN 16 and earlier (Inclusive)

Secondary Zone: DOR is 02 JUN 16 thru 06 JUN 17 (Inclusive)

3. SFC Selection Information. The following is a profile of the Staff Sergeants that were selected for promotion to Sergeant First Class:
 - a. The total number of Staff Sergeants considered for promotion was 627; number selected for promotion was 285. Armor selection rate was 45.09%; the total Army selection rate was 41.1%.
 - b. The average age of those selected for promotion within CMF 19 was 31 years. The oldest was 49 years of age and the youngest was 24 years of age.
 - c. The average Time in Service (TIS) for those selected for promotion was 9.7 years. The highest TIS was 16.5 years and the lowest was 6.11 years.
 - d. The average Time in Grade (TIG) for those selected for promotion was 2.6 years. The highest was 12 years and the lowest was 2 years.
 - e. All of the NCOs selected for promotion were high school graduates or equivalent. Of the 285 Armor NCOs selected for promotion, 52.98 % had some college. The following is the level of education for selectees:

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- (1) No college: 26.67% had no college (76 of 285)
- (2) Some College: 52.98% had some college (151 of 285)
- (3) Associates Degree: 16.14% had the equivalent of two year degree (46 of 285)
- (4) Bachelor’s Degree: 4.21% had the equivalent of a four year degree (12 of 285)
- (5) Master’s Degree: 0% had the equivalent of a six year degree (0 of 285)

f. The average GT score for those selected for promotion was 111. The highest GT score was 138; the lowest GT score was 77.

g. 19 of 285 of the selectees (6.67%) were currently serving in Security Forces Assistance Brigades.

h. The demographic breakdown for selectees is as follows:

	Caucasian	African American	Hispanic	Asian	Other
TOTALS	234	24	9	12	6
PERCENTAGE	82.11%	8.42%	3.16%	4.21%	2.11%

i. The Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) of the selectees had an average of 255 points. The highest score recorded was 300 (total of 15), with the lowest being 68. There were 13 SSGs with permanent profiles selected for promotion. There were 168 (58.95%) SSGs with an APFT average of 260 points or higher that were selected for promotion. Below is a breakdown of selectees who had a numeric code in an identified area of their Physical Capacity, Upper Extremities, Lower Extremities, Hearing, Vision / Eyes, Psychological (PULHES) categories.

	P	U	L	H	E	S
19K	7	0	13	7	0	0
19D	4	2	5	12	0	0
TOTALS	11	2	15	19	0	0

j. Professionally developing assignments:

	Master Gunner	Drill SGT	Recruiter	O/C	NCOA	AC/RC	ROTC	Instr (ABOLC, CLC, ARC, etc.)
19K	16	4	46	0	10	5	2	21
19D	9	31	42	3	8	16	0	23
TOTALS	25	35	88	3	18	21	2	44
Percentage	8.77%	12.28%	30.88%	1.05%	6.32%	7.37%	0.70%	15.44%

k. The following data depicts attendance at professional development schools.

	Sniper	Battle Staff	Airborne	Air Assault	Pathfinder	Ranger	EIA
19K		2	5	11			23
19D	3	11	42	68	8	5	21
TOTALS	3	13	47	79	8	5	44
Percentage	1.05%	4.56%	16.49%	27.72%	2.81%	1.75%	15.44%

	Jump Master	Cavalry Leaders Course	Army Recon Course	Master Resilience Trainer	Master Fitness	SHARP Foundation
19K			10	3	17	40
19D	8	30	30	15	30	44
TOTALS	8	30	40	18	47	84
Percentage	2.81%	10.53%	14.04%	6.32%	16.49%	29.47%

l. Critical Leadership Time: The following chart below outlines the amount of critical leadership time as a Tank Commander / Squad Leader that each selectee completed prior to selection. The average time spent as a Tank Commander / Squad Leader was 28 months, with the highest being 76 months and the lowest being 0 months (8 x SSGs).

Tank Cdr / Squad Ldr Time	<24	24-36	37-48	>49
19K	59	36	9	5
19D	62	61	32	13
TOTALS	121	97	41	18
Percentage	42.4650%	34.04%	14.39%	6.32%

4. General observations.

a. OCOA believes the selection board identified our best Staff Sergeants for promotion to Sergeant First Class. It is our opinion that the promotion board followed the branch guidance written in DA Pam 600-25 (Chapter 10, 10-10, para I) which clearly states that a Staff Sergeant needs to have 18-24 months optimal critical leadership time to be eligible for promotion to Sergeant First Class. 79.86% of SSGs completed their critical leadership time. However, there were several instances where the board did not adhere to the exact guidance written in DA Pam 600-25.

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b. Armor Branch has a total of 1,430 positions authorized for Armor Crewman and Cavalry Scouts that hold the rank of Staff Sergeant. The current breakdown is 606 positions for 19K3Os and 824 positions for 19D3Os throughout the active Army armor career management field (CMF 19). There were 187 Armor Crewman considered for promotion and 440 Cavalry Scouts considered for promotion. Of those selected, 112 of the selectees (42%) had a 19K background; 173 of the selectees (58%) had a 19D background.

c. These NCOs selected and completed tough demanding assignments. They had numerous professional developing assignments throughout their careers. They served the Armor Force well as Recruiters, Drill Sergeants, Observer Controller/Trainers, Instructors, and in many other critical assignments. There were 7 of 285 selected that have served in multiple professional developmental assignments during their career. Also, 22 of 285 NCOs selected had a minimum of one professional developmental assignment coupled with one professional developmental school. An example would be serving as a Recruiter, but also attending / graduating Army Reconnaissance Course. Additionally, 48 of those selected for promotion had served in a Platoon Sergeant position with 19 serving over 12 months successfully. Those serving successfully in positions as PSGs were looked favorably upon by the board. There were 11 NCOs that did not have the branch development time as a SSG (18-24 months as described in DA PAM 600-25, 11 AUG 2011) needed. OCOA believes that this critical leadership time is needed to be successful at the next level.

d. Armor NCOs across all brigade combat teams formations compete equitably for promotion. The key for selection remains excellence in key leadership positions as evidenced by multiple NCOERs, supported by sustained performance in the generating force.

5. The Armor proponent highlights the following from the field After Action Report:

a. Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report (NCOER)

(1) Discussion: Noncommissioned Officer Evaluation Report (NCOER). The structure of the new NCOER provides raters and senior raters an effective means to clearly articulate an NCO's performance and potential to promotion/selection boards. However, the board found that a significant number of raters/senior raters did not utilize the form to its full potential and frequently sent ambiguous messages. Reviewers and senior leaders must professionally develop their subordinate raters / senior raters to ensure those junior leaders understand how to clearly convey a concise, unambiguous message to the promotion/selection boards regarding a Soldier's performance and potential.

b. Rater and Senior Rater Comments.

(1) Discussion: The board found that raters and senior raters frequently sent ambiguous messages regarding an NCO's performance and potential using the new NCOER. Examples include: 1) senior raters failed to provide any comments on promotion potential or future schooling in their narrative; 2) senior raters with immature profiles expended a Most Qualified block check on an NCO and then were forced to follow up with a Highly Qualified on the next evaluation; 3) a significant number of senior raters, particularly in institutional and broadening assignments, highly enumerated NCOs but then selected a qualified block check rather than Highly Qualified; 4) many senior rater narratives were not clear and concise, which forced board members to attempt to interpret the senior rater's intent; 5) in numerous instances, derogatory events that occurred during the rating period were not reflected on the NCOER by the rater and/or senior rater; and, 6) vague senior rater comments such as "promote when eligible" and "promote when ready" were not helpful to board members. Additionally, many NCOERs showed significant variance between rater's and senior rater's assessment of an NCO. While there can be differences between a rater's and senior rater's assessment of a Soldier with regard to performance versus potential, when they are completely de-synched from one another it calls into question the evaluation.

(2) Recommendation: Senior raters should quantify by ranking the rated NCO against his or her peers early in their narrative and should clearly indicate potential for promotion and education. Senior raters must clearly distinguish their best NCOs from their peers so the board does not have to interpret their intent. Additionally, the senior rater narrative should be consistent with the block check, and both the block check and narrative should reflect failures to meet a standard. Raters/senior raters should capture derogatory events that occurred during the rating period in the block check and the narrative. Most importantly, reviewers and senior leaders must professionally develop their subordinate raters/senior raters to ensure those junior leaders understand how to clearly convey a concise, unambiguous message to the promotion/selection boards regarding a Soldier's performance and potential.

c. Soldier Record Brief (SRB).

(1) Discussion: SRB and Army Military Human Resource Record (AMHRR) records were inconsistent. The board witnessed multiple discrepancies between assignment history, duty position, civilian and military education, and certifications and awards. Furthermore, several SRBs were ill-maintained and displayed "incoming personnel" or "known losses". Such records were viewed unfavorably by the board as it brings into question the NCO's commitment to their own file.

(2) Recommendation: Raters and senior raters must take the time to mentor their NCOs on how to maintain/certify their board files in preparation for centralized promotion boards. NCOs competing for promotion must understand that the accuracy or inaccuracy of their board file is a direct reflection of them; failure to correct file deficiencies sends a message to the board.

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d. The Department of the Army (DA) Photo.

(1) Discussion: A large number of missing photos, particularly among junior members of the cohort, gave the perception that NCOs either did not understand the requirement of having a current photo on file or lacked genuine concern for advancement. Poorly fitted uniforms gave an unprofessional appearance and/or made the NCO appear overweight. Grooming standards on males and females were out of tolerance for several NCOs in areas such as sideburns, mustaches, and haircuts.

(2) Recommendation: Raters/senior raters should mentor their NCOs on the importance of having a current DA photo in accordance with regulations. NCOs must ensure their uniforms and grooming standards are in accordance with AR 670-1, and should have a senior NCO assess and provide feedback on their appearance.

e. Personal and Professional Development (Professional Military Education (PME) and skill producing schools).

(1) Discussion: The board viewed NCOs who pursued self-improvement through military and civilian education favorably; they viewed NCOs who completed only the minimal education requirements to become eligible for promotion less favorably. Board members also viewed NCOs with qualifications and certifications such as Master Resiliency Trainers, Equal Opportunity Advisors, Victim Advocates, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, Master Fitness Trainers, etc. as more competitive and prepared for responsibilities at the next level. Additionally, the board viewed leadership training such as Ranger, Airborne, Air Assault, Pathfinder, etc. and membership in professional clubs such as the Sergeant Audie Murphy or Sergeant Morales clubs as highly favorable.

(2) Recommendation: NCOs and their raters/senior raters should be familiar with DA Pam 600-25 and the military and civilian education requirements/recommendations by rank. NCOs should proactively pursue self-improvement opportunities to differentiate themselves from their peers; raters/senior raters should afford NCOs the opportunities to attend schooling.

f. Soldier Readiness and Physical Fitness

(1) Discussion. The board viewed NCOs who consistently demonstrated physical fitness excellence and maintained their weight in accordance with AR 600-9 favorably while they viewed Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) failures and enrollments in the Army Body Composition Program (ABCP) unfavorably. Raters/senior raters who reflected the last APFT scores and failures to meet standards (APFT and/or ABCP) assisted board members in quickly differentiating between NCOs who met/exceeded standards from those who failed to meet standards.

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(2) Recommendation: Individual fitness directly impacts individual and unit readiness; leaders must hold subordinates accountable on their evaluations for not meeting standards regardless of rank, duty position, or skillset.

6. Conclusions or general comments.

(1) Senior leaders must proactively talent manage their populations to ensure that NCOs serve in, and master, critical leadership positions prior to moving into broadening/institutional assignments. Requirements outside of the warfighting enterprise have reduced the time NCOs have to develop in key operational leadership positions and have reduced the grade at which they transition into broadening/institutional assignments. The board identified numerous NCOs who had not completed the branch-directed 18-24 months of critical leadership positions prior to moving outside of operational assignments. Because performance in key leadership assignments continues to be the most influential information analyzed by the promotion board, the trend towards fewer key leadership evaluations made the board's analysis more difficult. An observation made in regards to NCOs PCSing from BCT to BCT, is that there were 26-19D3Os and 13-19K3Os that fell into this category. This trend shows that those NCOs did not complete a broadening assignment, but moved from one FORSCOM unit to another. This is a significant number of leaders that are missing an opportunity to expand their knowledge base and grow their understanding of being a more adaptable and diverse NCO (3 NCOs had been at Ft. Hood and 1 NCO at Ft. Bragg the entirety of their career). Also, there were several SSGs that were stationed at Ft. Benning for three years or more that PCS'd without attending a developmental school such as ARC, CLC, or Battle Staff. There were eight selectees flagged for APFT, ABCP, law enforcement investigation and involuntary separation prior to, during or shortly after the time frame in which the board convened. As a note of reference the breakdown for awards of significance for the FY19 SFC board is as follows: 15 BSM, 7 MSM, and 4 PH recipients.

(2) The new NCOER provides raters and senior raters an effective means to clearly articulate an NCO's performance and potential to promotion/selection boards. However, raters and senior raters frequently do not use this tool effectively, because raters/senior raters at the platoon-level are relatively junior. It is imperative that their senior leaders provide adequate mentorship and oversight regarding evaluations to properly develop these junior leaders and ensure evaluations unambiguously identify an NCO's performance / potential to the board.

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7. Point of contact is the undersigned at todd.r.crawford.mil@mail.mil, or (706) 545-7725.

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